The Church School Teacher

ume XXIII May 1954 Number 5

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VACATION CHURCH SCHOOL

MAGAZINE FOR CHURCH SCHOOL WORKERS

THE CHURCH SCHOOL TEACHER

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The Church School Teacher

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Just a Few Words

By the EDITOR

EVERYONE likes a good talk session. And that's exactly what we give you this month—a talk session about Vacation Church School.

Being no McCarthyite, we insist on the freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution. So writers and readers are given the liberty to agree or disagree.

Pull up a chair, won't you?

Success Story

By MABEL F. OLSON

BECAUSE we have had large enrollments, annually, in our Vacation Church School we have learned the need of long range planning for this important work. Last summer over 300 pupils were enrolled. We look forward to an even larger enrollment this year. We feel that our large attendance is due mainly to the fact that we are giving the children the things "most needful"—training them to know and love God's Word, helping them to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ so that they can live as God's children in relation to their Heavenly Father, their parents, their brothers and sisters, their playmates and neighbors.

We try not to duplicate our Sunday school lessons. Rather we aim to supplement the work we do on Sundays. Having the children daily enables us to carry out a much more comprehensive and thorough program than we can do in the Sunday School. Memory work, especially, can be learned easily and thoroughly when there is a day-to-day emphasis. Pupils also form daily habits of Bible reading and prayer which often

Miss Olson is Sunday School Superintendent at First Lutheran Church, Bismarck, North Dakota.

carry over into their home lives and become the ground work of the family altar.

The first step in the Vacation Church School project is making the congregation aware of the vast possibilities of intensive day-by-day Christian teaching. This can be done through the pastor in the pulpit, at the organization meetings, through a news letter or church bulletins. The Easter program brings the children before the congregation and is an opportune time to mention the Vacation Church School. From that time on, a Vacation Church School registration blank is circulated at all gatherings where parents are present to enable them to register their children for the Vacation Church School. Early registration of the majority of the children makes it possible to form tentative plans for class rooms, equipment, necessary teachers, transportation, etc.

Teachers

To obtain qualified teachers for the Church school is a matter which requires much prayer and consideration. Many of the fine Sunday School teachers are unable to serve due to being employed during the week. We often find however, that Christian public school teachers are willing to serve in the Vacation Church school. All who are invited to teach must be contacted early for people plan their vacations far in advance. The success of the Church School, be it on week-day or Sunday, depends upon the Christian attitudes and teaching ability of the instructors. The need is for consecrated workers, people who have love and sympathetic understanding of children and who can maintain at all times an atmosphere of reverence and order in the class room and at worship assemblies.

In Bismarck the pastor and the Education committee of the church board meet with the teachers early in May to pray and make the preliminary plans for the Vacation School. Teachers are informed of their general duties, the materials to use, daily program, time and place of meeting. Each teacher receives the summary of work done the previous year, the names of the pupils and their record of attendance. This information is on a form blank which is always given to the teachers to turn in for the office file and it is a great aid and time saver as we begin each new summer session.

Materials

We use the Vacation Church School materials recommended by our Augustana Education Board, supplemented by film strips, Missionary material from our church papers, and selected Christian story books for children.

Since playgrounds, wash rooms, and worship rooms are hardly adequate for our needs, the worship periods and recess periods must be carefully planned. Each department has its own worship period, except that grades 4 to 8 meet together. It is planned so that the older group has recess while the

primary grades use the sanctuary for worship. When their worship period is over, they use the playground and the older children use the sanctuary for worship. Whenever possible, the pastor leads the worship service. One of his series of children's worship is especially outstanding: the sermonettes are based on the church symbols—the cross, the candle, the altar, the cup, and so on. Some of these symbols are beautifully portrayed in the art glass windows which helps to impress upon the children the beauty and significance of the symbols. We try to have all our heavier courses early in the morning. Recess and worship occur near the middle of the mornings. Expressional work, dramatization, films and slides correlated with Bible and catechism work, find their place near the end of the busy morning session.

Assistants

Pre-school and Primary teachers have high school girls to assist in hand work and recreation activities. In grades four through eight the teachers take turns in playground supervision. The older boys play ball and participate in an inter-church school baseball tournament at the end of the two-weeks' term of the city Church Schools. The teachers have several general staff meetings during the two weeks. Each morning at 8:30 they meet in department groups for prayer fellowship and are on hand at 8:45 to greet the children as they arrive.

To help in financing the Vacation Church School the parents are requested to send with each child on the opening day of school, the sum of one dollar. Parents are informed of this in a letter and are also reminded to see that their children bring Bibles, pencils and other needed equipment. No child is made to feel that the dollar is a "must." Because the sum is small, most of the children pay it and this goes a long way toward defraying Church School expenses.

The Congregation

During the weeks when the Church School is in session the entire congregation is aware of the all important activity. Posters are on display and the daily paper carries news stories of the event. On Sundays the children participate at the morning services in songs, unison readings, memory works or quizzes. Pupils' handwork, maps, notebooks and drawings are on display in the church parlors. At the end of the session the Brotherhood sponsors a picnic and the children are given an opportunity to help in planning their own recreation and program for this occasion.

No phase of the Church teaching program gives greater satisfaction and cause for thanksgiving than the Vacation Church School. The co-operation of parents and friends in transporting the children, faithful attendance and a real desire to learn God's Word on the part of the pupils (many being non-members), teachers who

are enthusiastic and co-operative even when working under handicaps of crowded rooms and inadequate equipment—all would indicate that, as a Church, we have barely touched the possibilities which could be attained during the long summer vacations. In Bismarck we have only nine months of public school. With adequate equipment and class room facilities, a three or even a four week Vacation Church School could well become a reality.

Edmonton

By KARL J. DANIELSON

NORTH of the international boundary lies the deep, vast country of Canada—a friendly neighbor and an important segment of the Augustana Lutheran Church. North of the State of Montana, 400 miles from the United States border, lying relatively in the center of the Province of Alberta, is the booming capital city of Edmonton. Known as the "Oil Capital of Canada," Edmonton has shown annual population increases of over 10,000 for the past decade. Here among some 200,000 or more inhabitants we were privileged to carry on a variety of parish activities. One of the most heartening and satisfying of the many pastoral experiences was the activity among our children which led us into the avenue of the Vacation Bible School.

The parish in Edmonton is a downtown church. As is frequently the case in such a situation, the Sunday Church School enrollment is low in proportion to the adult confirmed membership. Pupils are drawn from an extremely wide area—up to a radius of 20 miles. Bus service is relatively poor from some areas of the city so that transportation presents a real problem.

Another difficulty which our Church, and the Lutheran Church as a whole, faces in Canada is the fact that we are a minority Church. Especially in the western section in the prairie provinces, Lutheranism is not well established and relatively unknown. However, in the Edmonton situation this did not prove to be as great a hindrance as was thought to be the case.

High Standards

In Edmonton the pattern of education set in the public schools is a very healthy one, we believe. The excellent educational procedures are an aid to the parish education program since parents, as well as the children, have a high regard for the value of education.

The Rev. Karl J. Danielson is now pastor of Augustana Church, St. Paul, Minnesota.

This is noticeably reflected in Church School classes where the problem of discipline, on the whole, seems to be at a minimum.

However, in the new areas of the city where family dwellings are sprouting up virtually over night, the public schools are crowded beyond capacity. Children in the lower grades in these areas must attend classes on a half-day basis.

The public school years runs ten months out of the twelve, dismissal being in the latter part of June. Immediately upon the release of the public schools, we began the great Vacation Bible School adventure in our parish. We met for nine morning sessions utilizing two Saturday morning sessions in our schedule. In this way our school was concentrated in a period of a week and a half, opening Thursday and continuing through the following Saturday. It was climaxed by a closing program for parents on Sunday evening. The advantages in scheduling our program so closely upon the heels of the public school dismissal were that other Vacation Bible Schools were not yet in session, the majority of the children had not yet gone out of town on vacation, and the idea of school was still very much a part of their thinking.

Early Planning

The success of this venture was largely due to the co-operation of the Board of Administration, the Sunday Church School teachers who worked in committee, and the enthusiasm of the entire congregation.

Early in the spring the detailed planning was made. Various curricula were examined and the particular series was selected and ordered. The staff was arranged and drivers to transport children from outlying areas were asked to volunteer.

Six weeks before the opening session the Vacation Bible School was announced in the Church bulletin. Constant repetition and encouragement was given by the pastor on succeeding Sundays emphasizing that a record attendance goal had been set and stressing the progress that had been made thus far. Families were urged to invite unchurched children in their neighborhoods to come with their children to the Vacation Bible School. Pre-registration blanks were used.

Advertising

Outdoor advertising was utilized. A large canvas sign placed in the yard of the Parish House served as an inducement to neighborhood children. Attractive fliers were distributed from door-to-door around the church area and throughout the city. Church School pupils were urged to contact fellow-playmates. By constant advertising and earnest prayer, we could see the enthusiasm spreading even before the first session began.

Over 700 miles were driven to furnish transportation for some 50 children—all voluntarily given.

The numerical results computed show that nearly two times as many pupils were enrolled in our 1953 V.B.S. as in our regular Sunday School and five times as many as in the V.B.S. of the previous year.

Since the majority of the Sunday Church School teachers were employed during the week, a whole new staff was set up. Vacation Church School teachers and helpers were parents and those not regularly serving in our parish education program. It was a sacrifice on the part of many of the staff to come each day, spend three hours teaching, another hour "clearing up" and other hours at home preparing for the next day's session. The sessions were held in an old Parish House and in a new Church, the basement of which was unfurnished. Yet in such circumstances the teachers, using imagination and ingenuity captured the learning experience and employed the teaching experience for Christian ends.

Prayer, early planning, constant advertising, and sacrifice were the basis of our successful endeavor. This, together with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit working in devoted teachers and in enthusiastic pupils, resulted in a wonderfully gratifying experience. Whatever of numerical results were achieved, the most notable results are those which cannot be measured—those results of a Christian learning experience which oftentimes are evidenced only years later in Christian character and behavior.

The Fellowship of Those Who Care

By RAYMOND W. KING

WE COULD very easily say that the greatest battle in the world is the battle for the minds of our children. And I often wonder if our church is on the winning side of this battle. At times I would most assuredly say that we are but more often I find myself saying no, we are not winning this battle. I believe that more often than not, children's work in the church has been a step-child to the church. It is time that this be changed.

What better way can we change this trend than becoming conscious of the yearly vacuum in the life of the child when schools are closed for the summer. Too often when our public schools close their doors our churches do likewise. We take a vacation also, not realizing that in the summer we may have those children merely for the asking.

Let's wake up to this fact. Let's

Mr. King is Minister to Youth, Zion Church, Worcester, Mass.

plan a Church Vacation Bible School this summer.

May I tell you a few facts about Vacation Bible School which we conducted? Let's begin with *advanced preparation*. We secured our material about two months in advance, at which time each of the department's material was gone over and each lesson and project worked out in the manner in which we would like the teachers to prepare their lessons and present to their pupils. All this was done by the director of the school.

After this was done the leaders for each of the departments were called in and the material presented to them. About two weeks before our school opened all of our teachers were called together and the material and lesson plans and special projects were presented to them.

Another phase of our advance preparation, which aided us in our school was the *pre-school visitation and publicity*. We prepared an enrollment card with these cards and the addresses of all our Church school children our visitation staff made visits on most of these children, thus obtaining a pre-registration of over a hundred pupils before our school began. Each child in the Church School also received a post-card advertising the School. Posters were placed in store windows in the community and newspaper articles preceded our opening. Had it not been for this pre-planning our school would not have been as successful.

Projects

Each of our departments had a *special project* for its class work. For example, one of our departments was studying "Following the Trail With Boys and Girls of Long Ago." In order that this study might be more real to them, their project was to make a set of slides on which they would depict different scenes of their travel, such as the different types of buildings, home furnishings and modes of transportation that they would see. They also wrote a narration to go along with these slides.

Several classes made stuffed animals to be sent to the children's wards in one of the local hospitals, a good number of table napkins were made and taken to our Home for the Aged. One department was kept busy tooling copper foil on which they had drawn the head of Christ. All of these projects correlated with the lesson material which was being taught. Thus our endeavor to make the lessons more interesting to the child, we believe, was successful.

Wide Range

Our classes in our Vacation Bible School covered a wide range of subjects from Bible Stories, Bible History, Catechism, Group Singing, Worship Periods, Handcrafts, Hymnology, Christian Living and Visual Education. Our Visual Aid Program consisted primarily of film-strips which were correlated with the program of study.

We have found that our young people, both boys and girls, who have just been confirmed like the opportunity of helping out in our school. We use the girls as helpers in the classes and the boys as helpers in the project work, as traffic guards and as recreational supervisors for our younger boys. All of this close co-operation of the teachers and of the additional staff has aided us in a successful school. I believe that the most important step we have taken in our School has been the extensive pre-planning.

I like to think that when the boys and girls in our community begin to shout that school is out and that vacation is here the church has not forgotten them, that when they pass our church and the sign is out "Come to Vacation Bible School this Summer." They will find something that is different than public school or Sunday School. They will have more time to do more creative things. They will have more time to learn more of Jesus Christ and His love. They will have more time to learn by doing, to learn by living.

All of this must—and this is the most important—be undergirded by prayer, the prayer of the director, the teachers, the parents, the congregation and the Pastor, *the fellowship of those who care.*

I mentioned at the beginning of this article that there is a battle for the minds of our children. I believe that the victory of this battle will be won only by those who care, care enough to begin a Vacation Bible School with their church, who will willingly say "yes" to a call to become a teacher.

Co-operation

By FRANK J. LUNN

THE purpose of this, another article on Vacation Bible Schools, is to show mainly what can happen where churches, pastors, teachers and parents co-operate. Our school, held immediately after public school closing, is a joint project of churches belonging to the Suomi Synod and the Augustana Church, with the Methodists sending their children and a teacher or two.

The Basic Plans

In the planning meetings held at intervals from January to May, a director, a public school building, materials, schedules, officers, teachers, and transportation are provided for. The Pastors and Sunday School superintendents meet as early after the first of the year as possible and obtain a director from the teaching staff of the previous year. Arrangements are made for obtaining one of the public school buildings. This provides the needed room and basic equipment for a Vacation Bible School. The Director with the Sunday School Superintendents recruit a teaching staff of 35-40 teachers for the 300 anticipated enrollment. A secretary-treasurer is selected to care for the necessary clerical work. Standing committees for publicity, transportation and the final program are activated.

Teacher-training is conducted by leaders chosen from the group and the art teacher. This begins after the teachers have received both pupils and teachers books and have had a week or two to familiarize themselves with the contents and have pertinent questions to bring out. Each lesson with its related visual aid, art, handiwork and music is studied under the guidance of the leader and the art teacher. During the school days consultations are held each day from 11:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon when particular problems develop and when the teachers anticipate the next day's work, and the special problems it entails.

Talent and Worship

Our teaching materials integrate Bible lessons, music, art and handiwork phases. Music is handled by a public school teacher of music, art work by an amateur artist and visual aids by people at least somewhat familiar with the fundamentals of using visual aids. One other thought along this line of using special talent as much as is available pertains to the handling of the worship portion of the daily class work.

For the worship service we have the children assemble at the opening time, 9:00 a.m., at the larger

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Mr. Lunn is pastor of two churches, Immanuel of Wakefield, Mich., and Zion of Mellen, Wisconsin.

Lutheran Church. The two Lutheran pastors take turns at conducting a 30-minute Junior Worship, which is a condensed version of the Common Service, with time for a 5 minute sermonette. Robed choirs sing a hymn at every service. It has been our experience that if the children are treated like adults with reference to worship, they will tend to act more adult in their behavior in classes and in life.

Typical Morning

The children walk in class groups to the school a few blocks away and begin their work in the Beginners, Primary, Junior and Intermediate class sessions, with a separate class for each age. A typical morning's class would find the children studying a lesson from the Bible, with questions to work out in a workbook based on the Bible lesson or story, time for learning a new hymn or song (taught by a teacher of music), then back to classwork, art work and handicrafts, all lesson-related. For instance, a group studying Jesus' parables would make puppets and staging to act out the parables at the Parent's Night Program. Some of the smaller children are given a recess period for recreation by classes. Those from the Primary classes, 6 years and up, have no recess but instead go to a sound movie which relates to the general theme of their lesson material.

On the evening of the next to the last day of the school, the children stage a program at the church for the parents. Each group from Beginners to Intermediates has a part in this program. One department, as decided by the teachers of that department, may present one or two songs that bring out the main theme of their two weeks work. Another may use some of the Bible lesson material in a sort of question and answer spelldown, etc. The evening's program is concluded as the children and parents go to the class rooms to see the exhibits of workbooks, art work and handiwork and special demonstrations such as the puppet show. Incidentally this puppet show, as produced by the boys and girls of the Intermediate division has proved the most popular and instructive demonstration of the work done by the class and a Christian witness of the faith of the boys and girls. Informal coffee and conversation for the parents and ice cream and noise for the children puts the finis on the Parent's Night Program.

Financing

As to the financing of our school, we have found that a letter from the publicity committee stating the costs of providing each pupil with material, transportation, etc. and asking for a free will gift is the best way for us. Any deficit that has developed, due to extra costs or lack of enough free will offerings, is met by the offering received at the Parent's Program. One stimulating incident from such a Program will illustrate. A deficite of $90.00 had developed

and when the finance chairman arose to make a plea for the offering he asked the parents for $90.00. The treasurer came to him just as his 6 year old daughter ran to him at the close of the program and the treasurer spoke first saying, "Isn't it wonderful we received $89.90 in the offering." All the while the 6 year old was tugging at her daddy's pant leg saying, "Daddy, Daddy, they didn't get my dime."

Back of any worth-while Vacation Bible School lies a lot of hard work and prayer by the director, S. S. supt's, pastors, teachers and other workers. Just how they do this work it is not possible to indicate in a short article of this nature. But the work will be done if the right motivation of real service to the children (as unto Christ) can be inspired in the whole group working in the school and if the best teaching tools, that is lesson materials, handicrafts and visual aid, are selected by the planners.

Camp Elba

By FLORENCE L. ANDERSON and ELLEN JOHNSON

AT Chautauqua Lake Lutheran Camp (Camp ELBA) operated by the Eastern Lutheran Bible Camp Association, two weeks out of a five week period of Vacation Bible camp experience are devoted to nine, ten and eleven year-olds each July. The executive board, consisting of members from Jamestown, N. Y. churches, has charge of this lovely camp located on Lake Chautauqua. Approximately seventy boys and girls are accommodated at Camp ELBA during a single week.

The curriculum covers a three-year period, each week's activities in instruction, supervised study, handicrafts and recreation being a complete unit. This past summer the first week's instruction was devoted to the course entitled *Worshiping Our Holy God,* (Lutheran Bible Institute), and the second week, *Our Wonderful Saviour,* (Concordia Publishing House). The course of study offered in the vacation Bible Camp is completely different from that of the Daily Vacation Bible Schools held in August of each year in the local churches. Because these two schools do not operate parallel to one another, many children take advantage of both during the course of a summer.

The children participate in the planning of activities, particularly the devotional services where they are in a position to give expression to their varied individual talents.

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Miss Anderson is Director of Parish Education at First Church, Jamestown, N. Y. Miss Johnson is superintendent at Jamestown's Immanuel Church.

Bible School is Fun

By MARY G. SMITH

IF ANY single reason can be stated for the continued successful operation and growth of the Vacation Bible School in our church, it is found in this title, *Bible School Is Fun.* Fun for pupils, fun for teachers and helpers and fun for parents. Let me hasten to explain, ours is not a play school or a recreation school, it is indeed a Bible-centered school with a sincere and complete Christian emphasis. Nevertheless, it is fun and because it is, our problems of promotion are less than those of some other schools.

Our First

Eight years ago we had our first vacation school with 46 pupils enrolled, ranging from 3 to 15 years, 5 teachers and our Pastor. Our school opened with an informal worship service of song and story and a memory verse to learn together each day. This was followed by class study periods in divided age groups and various handcraft projects by each class. The school was again united in the church sanctuary for a short more formal closing worship service.

In the middle of the morning there was a break for games, including volley-ball for the older children and the teachers, and also a cup of coffee for the teachers and a bit of chatting. All of this added up to *fun.* The second year our enrollment doubled, and how did we procure teachers? The answer wasn't too hard: those who taught the first year said, "Do come and teach. It's hard work but we have such a good time!"

Of course many things contribute to the spirit of real enjoyment that permeates our staff and also our school. Most of our teachers have been Church School teachers who sincerely enjoy teaching the children and who are challenged with the potentialities of spending one and a half hours, a day, five days a week for two weeks, leading them in Christian growth and learning. What sincere Church school teacher doesn't long for more time, more opportunity to know the pupils, more chance to see their spiritual growth? Bible Schools affords this opportunity and teachers are quick to recognize it.

Helpers

Mothers who have not yet felt ready to accept the job of Church school teacher, have been very willing to work as helpers in Vacation Church School, especially after their children have attended and enjoyed one summer's session. Luther Leaguers have been most enthusiastic about serving as helpers

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Mrs. Smith is a member of Bethany church, Berkeley, California.

in practically all departments, and our newest source of man-power came last summer from two Boy Scouts who were working on the *Pro Deo et Patria Award*. They were fine recreation leaders at recess time, and if it can be said without their reading it, did a most interesting job of playing with the Beginners, "ring around the roses," "London Bridge," etc.

Over the period of eight years as our school has grown to the enrollment of about 150 to 175, we have done all we can to divide the many responsibilities so that no one has an "impossible job," as all had the first few years. Teachers are expected to come to the opening worship with their classes, teach the lesson hour, and attend chapel-worship which now follows recess, but then they are free of responsibility and new teachers take on the creative crafts period.

Crafts

This creative crafts period is spent in handwork activities which have been widely varied over the years, and are always diversified because of the varying ages of the pupils. However, our main objective has consistently been to relate our craft projects to our lesson material or to some phase of the child's Christian life.

Simple wood-working has always been a popular activity for the boys whenever competent help has been available. A plaster-molding set of the nativity figures affords much pleasure every year as the children mold and paint figures for their own homes. A sewing project in which the older girls made cotton skirts for migrant children was a popular craft-service project.

One year the Junior-Hi class, which has been composed consistently of an enthusiastic dozen or more members, had an unusual experience in dramatics and photography. A university student on vacation worked with them on dramatizing the stories of Zaccheus and the Feeding of the Five Thousand. Authentic costumes were borrowed from a neighboring church and one afternoon the class with teachers travelled to a nearby park for a picnic and the staging of the stories for Kodachrome slides. Later the pictures were put together with a script and the Church School has used and enjoyed them on several occasions. It was different, instructive, and it was *fun*.

Special Needs

In addition to dividing responsibility throughout our school we make a great effort to meet any special needs of the teachers whom we recruit. One neighboring mother with several small children of her own opens her home as a nursery for the little ones of other teachers. Wherever possible, transportation is provided for teachers who need it. In addition we send out advance notices about the school asking for requests for transportation from the pupils, and we try to fill these if at all possible. I sometimes think that a

scheme for providing washing and ironing services would be the biggest help in this line, but so far this has been unexplored.

Once a person has been helped to say "yes" to the request to teach, we try our best to equip her for the job she is to fill. At present we have three departments with a leader in each, and the teacher assigned, according to her preference, to the Beginners, Primary, or Jr-Hi, where she will meet with the department leader and teachers to discuss material and ways of presentation, preview visual aids, practice craft projects and the like. Materials which must be prepared in advance will be divided among the teachers so each has a job to do and no one bears the full burden.

Each year our vacation school staff and our Pastor choose a theme for the school and a theme song which gives joyous expression to the theme. Each year, also, the question is asked again and again, "What are the dates for Bible School? We want to begin to plan our vacation, but we don't want to miss the school." We are indeed grateful for the marvelous opportunity we have each summer to reach so many children with the Christian message and for the joy that children and adults share in Vacation Bible School.

How to Revive a Dying Congregation

By DELMAR D. CHRISTENSON

THERE is no doubt as to the worth of our Sunday School and Daily Vacation Bible School programs.

There are many areas where the congregation is too small to support a pastor. We have many of these places in Canada. Consequently, they become "preaching points," receiving the services of a pastor once in every three to six weeks. One cannot carry on any program satisfactorily under these circumstances so Sunday School, W. M. S., Luther League, and other organizations are sorely neglected. The net result of this lack is that the people lose interest and the congregation slowly dies.

The church of which I speak found itself in one of these disheartening situations. There had been no Sunday School for about seventeen years and prior to that only intermittently during the summer months. There had been no Daily Vacation Bible School other than one week three years ago. The church has been getting smaller and smaller. Year after year showed only a decrease by death and transfer. The worst

Delmar Christenson, an Augustana interne, is serving his internship at Messiah and Emanuel churches, Assiniboia, Sask., Canada.

shock came in 1952 when nearly half of the members transferred to a new mission, leaving fifteen confirmed members to carry on in the best way possible.

Emanuel was about to celebrate her 40th birthday. After forty years and only a hand full of members, one-third of them not taking an active interest in the work of Christ through His Church, my first question, upon arriving on the field, was, "Would she survive?"

When the church board heard that I had a car, which is a must on any field, but especially here in Canada, they offered to assist me with gas and oil mileage. I spent about two weeks meeting the people of the area. I found that a total of 89 in the immediate area, a five or six mile radius, were not attending any church regularly. Of these, a family of seven were Roman Catholic. This family, however, did send its three children to our school.

Transportation

I found that every family had a car and at least one pick-up truck, so transportation vehicles were not the reason for not attending church. I did find that the people felt that the two and one-half miles of road past the church were bad. After being stuck there myself I felt that way too! But, I assured them that this would be taken care of as soon as possible, and this stretch of road was built up prior to our 40th anniversary celebration in the fall.*

The most prevalent excuse for not attending services, was "They have never had a pastor, and services are so irregular." This was a valid criticism, for they have not had the services of a resident pastor for many years. But, I went on to explain to them that now they are going to have a theological student for a year and that regular services, weather and roads permitting, were going to be held. All pledged their support.

Many doubted that a church could succeed "because in the spring roads are bad and it is busy planting, then it's harvest, then comes winter and we stay home." Yet, when I indicated that they always get the children to school and that a Saturday night jaunt to town will be made if there isn't too much snow shoveling to do, they smiled and said, "Yes, that's true."

Evaluation

After my survey, I evaluated my findings. The results were very encouraging. I felt that here was a field that deserved much attention. The church had a $619 debt since the "dusty 30's" but a small drive would take care of that. Improvements and repairs were desperately needed but that was minor as well. What really was needed here was *people,* people who would come and worship, come and bring their children for the growth of His kingdom here on earth.

I found that there were about 12 or 14 children for our Daily Vacation Bible School. I listed various tasks for which I would need assistance and how many

drivers I needed each day to pick up some doubtfuls due to parents feeling they were too busy. I worked out routes for each driver. One family, too busy with their work to send their children, was asked to provide the water each day for drinking and washing. They felt pleased to be able to do this. Soon they brought their children! Our plans were then made with the Board and I was told to purchase whatever was needed. I ordered from our publishing house enough material so that if more came than anticipated there would be plenty of supplies.

Came the Dawn

Then came Monday morning, July 13, 1953. We had brought four children ourselves so we knew there would be that many in attendance. We were to begin at 9:00 a.m. but by 9:15 we found there were twenty present. We did not have enough tables and chairs for the group so the mothers volunteered to secure them for us. No one could believe that so many had come. Our attendance kept rising and at the end of the week there were 25 children who had attended and two visitors came one day each. The average attendance for the week was 22.6.

Our school day was divided into four parts. From 9 to 9:30 a.m. opening devotions were held including the memorization of a Bible passage by all of the students, hymn singing, an offering and the explanation that this offering would be used for missions. After this the children worked in the workbooks provided as part of the kits which each had. Then came a 15 minute recess when games were played.

Following recess, the smaller children had Bible storytime and the Juniors and Intermediates continued in their workbooks. Our noon recess commenced at 12 when all joined in table grace and then went outside to eat their lunches. The noon recess lasted until 1:15 after which we had a song period. Hymns and choruses were learned. During the week the children memorized some fourteen choruses and five hymns, and we found that they enjoyed this period immensly.

From 1:50 to 3:00 p.m. the arts and crafts period was held. The Beginner's made cut-out books, the Primary children worked out sewing cards, the Juniors did more advanced sewing cards, and the Intermediates made Biblical characters out of soap. They also made bookends out of wood on which were stippled a cross and hill scene which was colored and shellacked. All of the children did very nice work.

Achievement

On Friday afternoon the mothers and friends were invited to the program and picnic. There were 58 in attendance. They were very much surprised to hear and see what the children had learned in five days. Games and races were played with prizes for the winners and treats for everyone. The next

Sunday twenty of the children returned for Sunday School and to sing a few of their choruses at the worship service.

Our program for the next year calls for two weeks of school from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. School term in Canada is ten months and many had felt that the children would be tired of school. But not so. When these little ones seek our attention and the teaching of God's Word, we cannot neglect them.

A Sunday School was started after the week of Bible School and the attendance thus far has remained at a high average each Sunday. The children of this community have proved themselves to be fine little missionaries and they are doing much to extend Christ's Kingdom here on earth. Parents who told me a church could never succeed in this community are now working hard and diligently to get others interested.

Mr. C. does not divulge the secret of this amazing feat. But we could use him in my village.
Ed.

It's "Remarkable"

By MRS. ROBERT L. EDSTROM

"IT'S AMAZING!" "Really, it's wonderful what these children get in two weeks." "Even my pre-schooler has learned so much." "Yes, and mine has truly enjoyed it."

These and other remarks such as these are heard at the Open House which the children of Vacation Bible School of Bethlehem at Wahoo, Nebraska, hold for their parents at the termination of school. On this occasion, the children are the hosts, the program being excerpts of their regular schoolroom activities. There is child-parent viewing of work exhibits, and the koolade-cookie lunch is served by the older children in attendance. This Open House has been in practice at Bethlehem for the past four years, and each year, judging from the capacity house, the parents must enjoy it. The song, "Zacchaeus Was a Wee Little Man," to rhythm band accompaniment never fails to highlight a program.

It is true V.B.S. can be worthwhile and it can be fun, too, providing the groundwork has been laid for a systematic, orderly, yet flexible school. Such planning gives due consideration to the securing of qualified teachers, suitable study materials, homeogeneous age groupings. The age span in any group should not be too great, since the interest span varies according to the years. Preschool children should not be

Mrs. Edstrom is director of Bethlehem's Vacation Church School, Wahoo, Nebraska.

placed in groups with children who have already been initiated into schoolroom practices.

In Bethlehem the children of the eighth grade are still members of the Sunday School group. They are not included in V.B.S. However, they are used, especially the girls, as assistants to the regular teachers. Needless to say, the girls love it, and they do lighten the teachers' work in many ways.

At Bethlehem great care is taken in the selection of materials to be used. Augustana Book Concern materials are used; however, courses from other publishing houses have been utilized. A workbook usually accompanies a course.

Perhaps a word of caution might be sounded against too slavish use of the workbook. The V. B. S. teacher's task is to teach God's truths and foster a love for them that will last through their lifetime. Insistence on completion of stated amounts of work, especially for the slow learner, often causes a distaste for the matter studied. Workbooks per se do not stimulate real thinking.

Methods

A V.B.S. teacher who does not, as a public school teacher, need to worry about the mechanics of reading, may well utilize, besides the workbooks, the many other means available to get the truths across, such as oral presentations, interesting and stimulating discussions, problems to solve, music, visual aids, and worth-while handwork.

Each course is usually supplied with very detailed handwork. These prepared materials are usually a boon to the teacher, since the V.B.S. term is so short. However, the children do enjoy having it supplemented with other types of handwork which allow for individuality. Puppets have been utilized for this purpose. Hand puppets, one year depicted the story of Queen Esther. Puppets worked by strings have also been made, but the time was too short to be entirely completed in school. According to the script, written by the children, one year the story of Lydia opening her home to Paul for services was shown. Block print book covers, hangings, painting of large pictures, and other types of art used in the public schools may also be used to good advantage to illustrate Biblical truths and facts.

All-school activities are also helpful. One of these undertaken at Bethlehem one summer was an all-school paper, published weekly. The responsibility for securing the news rested with the oldest group of children. After the editing and the hectographing done by these pupils, the "V.B.P. News" was ready for distribution, one to each home.

Last year, from a suggestion made in the course, Israel *Takes a Long Journey,* a study was made of the church service used at morning worship. All children from second through seventh grades were participants. A detailed study

was made of our church liturgy. As a culmination of the study, a complete church service, including a ten-minute sermon and an individual hand shake at the door, was conducted by Pastor Wellington. With bookmarks at proper places in the hymnal, the service proceeded almost as smoothly as at an adult meeting. As one sees some of these same children ably using hymnals at Sunday morning services, one feels that this project has paid dividends.

A challenging Vacation Bible School will create and foster a love for the truths of the Bible. That should be one of its aims.

Advance for Christ

By ARNOLD ANDERSON
Superintendent of Thabor Lutheran Church Vacation Bible School
Wausa, Nebraska

"Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Cor. 10:31.

PLANS must be made long in advance for a successful venture in the all-important task of teaching the youth of our communities the great truths in the Word of God.

In a recent issue of *The Church School Teacher,* someone presented this challenging statement: "Reach More in '54. Teach More in '54." This should be our motto as we look into the future plans for the Vacation Bible Schools which will be held in the various churches.

"Advance for Christ through the Daily Vacation Bible School." —what a challenge faces us. We must not fail to take advantage of the God-given opportunities presented to us to give our children this intensive study in the Christian way of life.

It is indeed hard to put into words just what makes a successful Bible school; but I will try to list a few things that have worked well for us in our school.

We have received enthusiastic encouragement from both children and parents to hold the sessions within a week or two after the public schools close as the children are still in the routine of school work and have not settled down to the vacation period as yet.

We also have found more satisfactory results by holding all-day classes for a period of one week or more, rather than half-day sessions over a longer period of time. It seems as though the very small children take this in their stride.

The study periods start at 9:00 o'clock in the morning with a recess period in the forenoon, then their lunch hour at noon when they also greatly enjoy the Christian fellowship in games of their own choosing.

The afternoon study periods

start again at 1:00 o'clock, with another rest mid-way in the afternoon. We again take up our work, continuing until about 3:30 p.m.

Much can be accomplished in the line of memory work in this setup and we feel it has many advantages over the customary half-day sessions.

The teaching staff is composed of volunteer laborers, who believe the command of Jesus when he said, "Go, and do thou likewise." Each teacher has an assistant to help her in the routine and to provide more individual attention to those pupils needing it.

For the past several years the local school buses have been pressed into service for reaching those children that otherwise would not have had the opportunity to attend the regular sessions of Daily Vacation Bible School. All of the churches hold the schools at the same time, thus enabling all to take advantage of the bus service without much expense. The bus drivers are laymen willing to devote a few hours of their time to help out in this venture of reaching more of our children with the great message of Jesus' words when he said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me." The churches were unanimous in their approval of this method and all expenses for gas and oil were shared equally. Routes are mapped to serve the largest number of children wishing to take advantage of the bus service offered them.

Judging by the increased attendance each year we feel this has proven to be a worthy venture in which all the churches of the community gain in the overall "Advance for Christ" program.

The school term is climaxed with a group picnic on the last day and, needless to say, this is a highlight in the life of each participant. The following Sunday evening service is conducted by the Daily Vacation Bible School teachers and the pupils with all having a share in the service.

Ebenezer's Worship Service

By LEONA HARTJE

AT Ebenezer, as the chimes peal forth from the Church spire at 9:10 a.m. on Daily Vacation Church School mornings, children can be seen coming from each department to enter the Church sanctuary for the morning worship service. This has been preceded by a ten minute period in individual classes where teachers have greeted the children, discussed the day's theme and guided the children's thoughts as to their part in the coming worship service.

The worship service is of a formal nature. The departments have

Miss Hartje is parish worker at Ebenezer of Chicago.

their respective places in the sanctuary. Teachers in turn sit with their classes. As we enter, the organist is playing the prelude. Two of the Confirmation department boys act as ushers, handling to each worshiper the morning bulletin. Later, they will receive the offering. Each morning's meditation and hymns are centered around a different aspect of the Vacation Church School's theme. After the singing of the first hymn, our pastor, attired in gown, surplus, and stole, leads us in the Common Service liturgy. In order that our children may become better acquainted with the liturgy we use both the Morning Common Service and the Common Service Vespers during the two week period of our school.

Following the singing of the second hymn, our pastor presents a short meditation in such a way that all of us, from the youngest to the oldest, are helped to make a personal application of the theme. "Create in me a clean heart . . ." is heard as the children rise to sing the offertory. Each child has an envelope in which his offering is placed each day. After the prayer and benediction, the postlude is the key for children to leave the Church quietly, and return to their respective classes for the remainder of the day's activities.

Spring-board

This is what happens at our church. This is the "spring-board" for each day. From the worship service, each child has experienced an inner truth that God is Almighty; that we must worship Him with reverence and dignity. It brings about the realization that not only is God good, that He made us and cares for us, but that He is the center of our living from the beginning to the end.

Formal worship service can never start too soon in a child's life. A baby who is brought to Church with his parents from an early age certainly is richer than the child who enrolls in Church School, only, and thereby does not have the opportunity to experience the church service until a Junior, or perhaps upon confirmation. Children understand far more than we as leaders and directors often realize. They also learn discipline in their worship life.

Visiting our Vacation Church School worship service will prove these facts. And not only do we find children looking forward to "going into Church," but upon entering, we find many mothers who take time from their busy weekday schedules at home to worship with us these brief twenty minutes each day.

True, it is that "man does not live by bread alone." Only when we live in fellowship and communion with God can we live our best. And where can this be more fully experienced than in God's own House for children as well as adults.

At the Call of the Bell

By EUGENE NELSON

MY experience with Summer Bible School now extends over nearly fifteen years in schools ranging in enrollment from 24 to 97 pupils, and in four different congregations. I certainly lay no claims to being an expert in the field, but I am sold on the value of such schools. I have usually served as superintendent of the school and teacher in the Intermediate Department. In my estimation, the two most valuable weeks the pastor spends in a whole year are the week with his Luther Leaguers in Bible Camp and the week with his children in Bible School.

Preparation for Bible School should begin long before the school starts with careful selection of teachers. I have been fortunate in getting several volunteers from High-School age girls as assistants, but I usually have to go out to select my teachers. I do not ask for volunteers in an open meeting for fear of one poor but sincere candidate responding to my appeal.

For the past several years we have used the materials recommended by the Augustana Book Concern with some slight adaptations.

Sixty

In a school of sixty or less, I have usually followed a policy of having a teacher and an assistant for the Beginners, and similarly with the Primary, then one teacher for Juniors and one for Intermediate, with a special teacher for music and another as pianist.

When we have gotten much above the 60 mark, we have followed this pattern: One class for children three to four and one-half years; another class for those four and one-half to six, etc., having a year and a half age span for all the children up to twelve. Those of Intermediate age I have usually been able to include in one class. This arrangement has made for classes of fourteen to sixteen in size. All of the classes in the Beginners and Primary departments have assistants, and sometimes also in the Junior.

Our School is usually held the week immediately following Public School in the Spring. Each day begins with the ringing of the bell at 9:00. The first period is Chapel for all ages right in the sanctuary. The Pastor is always in charge of this service which lasts fifteen minutes. We have no chapel in the afternoon session.

Helpful Details

We always have an offering on Tuesday and Thursday, received at the Chapel hour. Thus we encourage the children to bear at least a part of the cost of the school. We do not pay our teachers, but some years the congregation has paid part of the cost to

Bible Camp to those who had served as teachers.

We have a fifteen-minute recess in the middle of the forenoon and similarly in the afternoon. The Beginners and Primary go out for recess at 10:15 and come in at 10:30; at which time the two older groups go out.

The period following Chapel we in the Intermediate Department spend in memorizing such passages as John 14:1-4, Psalm 27, Romans 12:1-4, Isaiah 53:1-3, etc. I have found that the average 12-13 year-old can memorize 3 such verses in the 15-20 minutes we devote to such memorization. The next period is Bible Study in the Handbook—then Recess, followed by the Music period.

Our Music teacher has the Beginners and Primary Departments together. She usually aims at teaching them some Gospel choruses, and one or two great hymns. She is of the firm conviction that every Lutheran child and adult should be able to sing at least two stanzas of "A Mighty Fortress" from memory or hang his head in shame!

After recess, in the Intermediate department, we have hymn studies, and missions studies. The Beginners attend only in the forenoons, and the smallest children are dismissed twenty or thirty minutes earlier than the Juniors and Intermediates.

In the two oldest Departments we have worked out special studies not included in the prepared lessons, such as one on "Great Church Musicians," "Church History," "History of the Augustana Church" and "Heroes of the Faith." Two of the most profitable types of hand work for these ages are map drawing, and drawing of illustrations of the Church year and Christian Symbols.

Mr. Nelson is pastor of Bethel church at Holdrege, Nebraska.

Think — Vacation Bible School

By FRANCES H. ERICKSON

EACH spring a renewed urge comes to me—let us prepare for Vacation Bible School and make it the best school we have ever had. In spite of the busy church schedule and the closing of the public schools, Vacation Bible School must play a major part in our planning.

Shall we have a Vacation Bible School this year? How often we hear the following excuses: "Everyone seems so busy and leaders are difficult to find" . . . "Children are tired of school and would not attend a Vacation Bible School if we had one." Are you willing to

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become influenced by these well meaning words . . . or will you say within yourself; "Our church needs a school and I am willing to give my time and talents."

One of the secrets of a well organized school is to *plan early*. If the leaders of the school are selected early, the chance of receiving a "yes" is greater than if one waits until a few weeks before the opening date. Select a general superintendent with care, then choose your department leaders superintendents, teachers, helpers, pianists, etc. If a school was held the year before, the natural thing is to ask the experienced teachers to return. But additional teachers are usually needed and they should be selected with the help of the pastor.

In April a short preliminary Vacation Bible School Teacher's session is held and at this time the Lord's guidance is sought, last year's school evaluated, plans discussed, schedules are outlined and committees are appointed. Now the teachers are beginning to *think Vacation Bible School!*

It is wise to give the department superintendents copies of the teacher's and pupils books of the courses before the April meeting. Yes, the leaders need to be inspired in order to put their co-workers in to the spirit of the school.

In May a date is set for a second meeting. Detailed plans are discussed, advertising dates are set up and the different departmental leaders meet with their teachers and helpers and make detailed plans for their departments. The lesson outlines are then studied.

Buyer

One person on the staff is appointed to act as the buyer for all Vacation Bible School handwork material. Before June 1st a list of all materials needed in the different departments must be turned in to the superintendent. All material is purchased and ready for the departments at least two weeks before the opening of school. (In the Los Angeles area a Teacher's Training Class was conducted one afternoon and each teacher visited her particular departmental group and thus received help and inspiration.)

A final staff meeting is held a week before the opening date. At this time our schedule is reviewed and a few changes are made, handwork materials are distributed and rooms are assigned.

Advertisement of the Vacation Bible School plans is a *must*. The church bulletin and church paper should carry the first announcement. Letters of fliers should be sent to each Sunday school pupil about two weeks before the opening of the school and the letter can be followed by a card, used as a last minute reminder. Two weeks before our own school opened two Junior boys were chosen to be "Sidewalk ads." One half hour before and one half hour after the Sunday school session they walked back and forth in front of the church carrying large cardboard

posters which advertised the Vacation Bible School.

Two Sundays before the opening of school the superintendent of each department advertised the Vacation Bible School by giving each child a colored paper circle with the words, "I AM GOING . . . ARE YOU GOING?" Going where? Vacation Bible School, of course.

During the opening session in each department (two successive Sundays before the opening date) a Vacation Bible School teacher was asked to give a three to five minute pep talk. Not just facts were given, but some objects or piece of handwork was shown in order to arouse the children's attention and curiosity.

Finally the school is prepared and teachers are ready. On the first day of school the pupils arrive on foot or in cars and buses. The children line up outside the church school door, single file, and walk to the opening assembly period singing "Onward Christian Soldiers." Once the program is underway they are led in devotions, instructions are given and teachers are introduced after which they lead their children to their classes. Two weeks pass and then the closing program.

Proof

Just to see the faces of those children and hear their voices repeat a few truths they learned in Vacation Bible School is proof enough that "our labors are not in vain." Parents, too, bring inspiration as they say, "Thank you for the Vacation Bible School" or "We hope you are planning a Vacation Bible School next year."

In our experience we try to get teachers, children and parents Thinking Vacation Bible School. If the leaders are sold on the project, the children will respond. You'll find that children themselves are the best missionaries and if a simple inexpensive method is used to encourage them to bring others, your school will naturally grow. For instance, you can cut out a colored shield, heart or other object which a child will receive when he brings a new child to V.B.S. If the same child brings additional new members (or visitors) during the period, short colored ribbons (with a colored sticker attached on the bottom) be taped to the back of the object. What was the cost? A few pennies. The results? More children added to your Vacation Bible School, more souls reached with the Word and more homes contacted for the church.

Be Sold

Be sold on the importance of the Vacation Bible School yourself . . . you cannot convince others without being satisfied yourself. Money and the time spent to advertise your school will pay big dividends in the form of pupils.

Children are pliable in His hand. Vacation Bible School is one means in the hand of our Lord to mold these young lives.

Memory Work in Confirmation Instruction

By GERHARD H. DOERMANN
Professor of Christian Education
Capital University Seminary

This is the third article in Pastor Doermann's series of four.

III. Goals or Purposes of Memory Work

In this section of the paper we will list and discuss the importance of memory work or of the power of recall of both kinds. For there are advantages to be gained from verbal memorizing as well as from the ability to recall ideas and concept systems. They are listed and briefly discussed in order to clarify our goals when we use them.

One purpose of word-for-word memorizing is to *help the learner retain facts in precise form.* To be useful, such memorized facts must be understood. The words used must be meaningful. If not, the facts so retained are not retained in precise form, for the learner will have only a hazy notion at best of what it is all about. In this area we would list for memorizing portions of Scripture, hymns, and other religious materials used in unison such as the Creed.

Also included would be Luther's explanations to the chief parts of the Catechism. In material such as the Creed, used in unison even by rather small youngsters, we might waive the requirement stated above that the words must be understood. Yet some understanding is necessary even then; for when a child has learned to recite something great and lofty merely as a mechanical ability, without thought, it is extremely difficult for him to use that same verbalization in later years with thought.

A second purpose in word-for-word memorizing can be stated: *to provide a vocabulary for practical uses of Christian truth.* Such practical uses would include speaking up for God and Jesus when others speak against Him, personal mission work, and the like. It may be argued that youngsters, when witnessing for Christ and doing personal mission work are

very simple and direct. They will simply invite another to "come along to Sunday school."

While this is true, I believe Scripture and hymns can be used by the very young if they are *guided in using it!* Such a purpose is particularly valid for the high school adolescent, who often gets into religious arguments with classmates and friends. And most of them love to debate and argue. Memorizing provides them with words and meanings that they can use intelligently.

A Storehouse

A third reason, the last we shall list from among many others that might be discussed, is one that the progressivist (an extreme progressive) in education would completely disqualify. It is: to provide a storehouse of choice Scripture passages and Scripture truth expressed in other ways such as hymns. Such a goal does not meet a present need of the learner and therefore in the opinion of some has no place in our education. If that were the *only* reason for memorizing in connection with catechetical work or other Christian programs, they might have a point. For certainly our *first* consideration must always be the vital need of the learner at the stage of life in which he finds himself at that time.

This is particularly true of Christian education, for we want our young Lutherans to be the best Christians they can be *NOW*. We do not want them to be Christians later only. We do want them to be even better Christians later than they are now, and there will be many things that we help them to learn now, which will also help them to continue to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ." This value of rote memory work is valid only in view of the other purposes of memory work.

Vast Difference

There is much to be said for the other type of recall, so we shall not consider other values of word-for-word recall. While the two main purposes of what I am calling ideological recall closely resemble the first two goals of rote memorizing, there is a vast difference in essence and in the procedures. We may state the first goal: *to provide a storehouse of truth to be used in and to stimulate Christian* thought. I believe that it is commonly true of us all that when we are "thinking," not expressing our thought to others, but "mulling something over" in our minds, we

use images or ideas that we need not express in words. Indeed sometimes we cannot find words to express the ideas that come to us. When ideas then are "stored" or images impressed in such a way that they can be recalled readily, they become a storehouse of truth. They will then be recalled when needed in a given thought process. The one idea will tend to recall the related idea, and the next, and so on until the ideological pattern is complete, complete to the extent in which the learner has made the total concept pattern his own. This type of recall guards the learner, which includes us all, from going off on a tangent with a Christian truth and thinking of only one side or one of the many phases of this truth. It helps the learner to see the whole truth, again to the extent in which the truth has become a part of his being.

Balanced Thinking

How complete such recall can be depends upon the physical, mental and spiritual maturity of the learner. By way of simple illustration, the learner who has been guided to an understanding and appreciation of Jesus' coming, will not go off on a tangent and think only of His second coming, but will relate his thinking also to Jesus' first advent. His thinking will be balanced. He will be guarded against soaring off into realms of speculation which may run counter to the truth that God has revealed.

Thought Patterns

This leads us to the second purpose, closely related to the first and already included in the illustration, namely: *to provide thought patterns or concept systems.* It should be our chief aim in confirmation classes to help our pupils get as complete a grasp and view of any topic in the confirmation curriculum as necessary for them in order that they may live the Christian life intelligently and purposefully.

This was Luther's concern and the reason for his explanations to the five chief parts. The main essential facts concerning the law, concerning the Creator, concerning the Saviour, and so on, without which intelligent, conscious, purposeful Christian living was impossible—these were Luther's concern in his explanations. And he has provided excellent outlines for thought patterns in his explanations, with perhaps the exception of one chief part.

An adolescent who had been guided to fix in mind as well as in

heart the thought pattern provided by Luther in his explanation to the second Article, would have a complete picture of salvation. Not all the details of the picture would be filled in, but he would have a complete outline picture. For even you and I are still filling in details in our picture of Jesus, our Lord and Saviour.

The working of a concept system or thought pattern might be illustrated (perhaps inadequately and briefly) in this manner. If a schoolmate should say to one of our recently confirmed, "I don't believe that Jesus was anything more than a good man even if I do believe that He is my only helper," the concept of Jesus' work would immediately recall the reasons why, in order to do this work, He had to be both God and man. It would recall, in such a situation, what Jesus actually did as Saviour, namely bought me and freed me from sin, death, and Satan. This in turn would recall the purpose for which He did this, "that I might be His own, and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness."

This type of recall does not depend upon rote or word-for-word memorizing. It depends on the relationship of ideas, not words. It is a concept system. The explanation of Luther is such a concept system. It becomes useful when one idea in the chain system recalls the related ideas. And this type of recall depends upon understanding and appreciation. For that reason a different method of impressing it is necessary than the drill method used in memorizing by rote. More will be said of this in our last section, part IV.

By way of summary of this section I would like to emphasize again that all memorizing is only a means to an end and not an end in itself. This is particularly true of word-for-word memorizing. Use it, certainly. Recognize the values in it, but do not let it overshadow the importance of understanding, appreciation, and the building of thought patterns or concept systems. For even these are not the ultimate goal. The ultimate goal of all confirmation instruction is to help those we guide to be consecrated C h r i s t i a n s, whose thoughts, attitudes, and actions are all dedicated to the service of God.

Dr. Doermann's article will be concluded next month

The Church Library

PART 2: THE TASK

By HENRIETTA FORGE DIESING

Organization:

CHURCH library organization follows the general standards accepted by all well-organized public libraries. These standards have been evolved throughout the years until now a practical, business-like system has resulted, which has been adopted by special libraries also (of which the Church Library in one). Although the technicalities of this system must be learned, they are so logical and understandable that they can easily be taught to an interested person who has initiative, aptitude, and a love for detail.

Administration:

Broadly speaking, all libraries have similar administrative policies, but the administration of special libraries necessarily differs in minor details, depending upon the clientele they serve. Therefore, policies of the Church Library should be worked out by the Pastor, the Board of Parish Education, the Library Committee (one representative from each organization within the Church), and the librarian and her staff.

The Start:

Perhaps a good beginning would be as follows: Since the Parish Education Committee is the guardian, so to speak, of Christian training in the congregation, it might be wise to have an individual in that group make the start. Assemble all existing library materials from their various dust-catching corners and then present the problem to the congregation: "Here are our holdings. Who, in our congregation, will accept the challenge to organize these materials into an efficient service to meet the spiritual, cultural, and intellectual needs of the Church?"

The Librarian:

Of course, if the congregation has a member with a professional library degree or with library experience who will assume the task, that situation is ideal. However, most smaller churches may not have a trained person to call upon. Although this will mean a little more work in laying the foundation, it should not be discouraging. Any individual with a fair education who has the educational

welfare of the Church at heart, who has business administrative aptitudes, who can work well with others and guide them in their work, who is interested in and friendly to all age groups, and who is willing to learn and eager to serve can establish the library and guide its growth.

The Staff:

The librarian will need helpers. At least one member of the staff should be a typist. There will be record cards to type and file, bibliographies to prepare. There are book pockets and charging cards to type. There will be the duties of checking out books, tracking down overdues, shelving books, withdrawing worn out books, repairing damaged books, making corrections in records, taking inventory, and the like.

A history of the library should be kept from the very beginning. This becomes a part of the Church Archives.

At this point the writer would like to make this suggestion to the librarian and her staff. Before she begins her work, an untrained librarian should visit a near-by well organized school or public library. She will learn that librarians are friendly people, so professionally minded and in love with their work that they are always happy to extend library service, and assisting another librarian is one way to do so. She will find that the librarian will welcome the opportunity to explain the standard classification system, the accession record, the shelf list, the card catalog, the charging system. After the library has been established, it would be wise to invite the librarian friend to a staff meeting where problems are discussed and where she may be able to make further helpful suggestions.

The Library

The physical set-up of the library should receive a great deal of thought. Of course, the ideal situation is a centrally located, spacious room with adequate shelving and good lighting. Since that is not always possible, select the best available space and resolve to improve the location in due time. It may even be necessary to share a room or to use a hallway. In this case, it would be wise to have book cases that can be locked.

Use whatever facilities are at hand to begin with. Keep the library as cheerful, attractive, and inviting as possible. If sloping shelves ("flats") are not available to display children's books, use tables. Display book jackets to attract readers.

Maintenance:

Adequate financial backing is essential to the growth of any project. The means of supplying an ample book and visual aid bud-

get is the individual problem of each church. Money for standard supplies must also be available for processing new books and repairing old ones. Perhaps the church can supply an annual library budget. Some annual offering could be set aside for the library. A book drive might harvest some desirable titles, but too often it is an avenue of disposal of worthless books rather than a worth-while contribution to the library. A drive by each organization for a monetary gift during National Book Week with the librarian authorized to purchase needed library materials would be well worth while and would also focus the attention of the congregation on the library. Library memorials are beautiful expressions of regard translated into loving memories that bring joy and inspiration to others. Such memorials should be appropriately inscribed.

The Challenge:

This, then is the task. But what a task! What a challenge for Christian service! Most of the initial problems will dissolve with a prayerful approach, a boundless faith, a resolve to work hard. Library work is challenging. It leads on and on. We eagerly follow.

Note: To follow: Part 3, "What of the Child?" (Reading levels and selection of children's books.)

CAMP ELBA

From page 11

The personnel of Camp ELBA Vacation Bible Camp includes a camp director, registered nurse, waterfront director, counselors, visiting teachers and several cooks. In the past the visiting teachers have included missionaries on furlough, Lutheran Bible Institute teachers, Pastors and local public school teachers. The counselors are always mature lay persons, both men and women, from the various Lutheran churches supporting this project. Many of these counselors are public school teachers of experience.

The cost per child per week approximates $15.00. Most of the congregations help finance children who would not otherwise find it possible to attend the camp. The children involved are given an opportunity to assist in the raising of these funds by the church. Some of the methods used are bake sales, paper drives, special programs, and offerings at the morning worship services.

Camporships are also provided children on the basis of perfect attendance at Sunday school, the period of attendance varying with each church. Also many of the churches afford their newly confirmed youth an opportunity to spend one week at Camp Elba as their guests. The majority of the confirmands take advantage of this wonderful opportunity, and find the experience very satisfying.